(c) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) No Sir. The prices of foodgrains for BPL families and sugar and kerosene oil for eligible persons/families under PDS are lower than the open market prices.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

International actions to resolve terrorism

1254. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the war on Afghanistan and indiscriminate killing of many civilians is establishing a dreaded terrorist group as fighters for national liberty and humanity in a way;

(b) if so, whether India, the worst sufferer of terrorism, should contemplate some international actions to resolve the peculiar crisis; and

(c) if so, how and by when such actions would be initiated?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The developments in Afghanistan impact directly on our national interests, including our security interests. These were adversely effected during the regime of the Taliban militia, when Afghan territories under their control had become the epicenter of terrorism, narcotics and obscurantist ideologies. The present war in Afghanistan is fight against terrorist and obscurantist forces of the Taliban. The fight against international terrorism is global and we support all efforts aimed at eradicating this menace from this world.

(b) and (c) The Government has already taken concrete actions to address the evolving situation in Afghanistan and has been in touch with several countries that take an interest in Afghanistan, as well with the United Nations. Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee has written to heads of State/ Government of a number of countries stating that the future Government in Afghanistan should be broad based and multiethnic with equitable representation from all ethnic and religious groups. India attended the recently held meeting of the Group of 21 countries on Afghanistan, convened by the United Nations in New York on 16th November, 2001, to discuss the emerging political and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. India also actively worked along with other countries in framing various UN resolutions on the question

terrorism, including the latest UN Security resolution 1373, which was adopted on 28th September, 2001 under Chapter VII of the Charter and outlined wide ranging comprehensive and mandatory steps to combat international terrorism.

During his recent visits to the Russian Federation, United States of America and United Kingdom, as well during his meetings with other Heads of State/Government, Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee forcefully brought out the need to systematically root out terrorism, not just from one country or one region, but from the whole world. In the Joint Communique adopted after the recently concluded second India-European Summit on 22nd November, 2001, both sides supported the fight against terrorism, wherever it occurred and regardless of motives, and hoped that Afghanistan would no longer remain a base for terrorist organisations and training camps.

Cost cutting measures in the MEA

1255. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Expenditure Reforms Commission has recommended for cost cutting measures in the Ministry of External Affairs;

(b) whether the Commission has also recommended for closure of seven Missions and downsizing of Missions in 12 other countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The Expenditure Reforms Commission in its report pertaining to the Ministry of External Affairs has made suggestions for restructuring and rationalising the functioning of the Ministry including, *inter alia*, suggestions for effecting savings where necessary.

(b) The Commission has suggested that seven Missions could be considered for closing down and has suggested possible reduction in the size of 22 Missions in other countries.

(c) Missions suggested for closure are in the following countries:

Botswana, Burkina Faso, Jamaica, Malta, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles and Peru.